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Commission on Sustainable Development
Sixth session
20 April-1 May 1998
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Sectoral theme: strategic approaches to freshwater management.
4. Cross-sectoral theme: transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising.
5. Economic sector/major group: industry.
6. Review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.
7. High-level meeting.
8. Other matters.
9. Provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Commission.
10. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixth session.

Annotations

1. Election of officers

Rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council provides that, at the commencement of the first meeting of a regular session, the Commission shall elect, from among the representatives of its members, a Chairman and such other officers as may be required. At its first to fifth sessions, the Commission elected, in addition to a Chairman, four Vice-Chairmen, one of whom served also as Rapporteur.

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In resolution 1997/63, the Council decided on the following future arrangements for the election of the Bureau of the Commission in order to implement the provisions of paragraph 136 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21:

> "(a) The Commission, immediately following the closure of a regular session, will hold the first meeting of its subsequent regular session for the sole purpose of electing the new chairman and other members of the bureau in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council;
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> "...
>
> "(c) The terms of office of the members of the Commission will begin immediately after the conclusion of work of the Commission's regular session held after 1 January, following their election by the Council (at its resumed organizational session of the previous year) and will end at the conclusion of the regular session held after 1 January following the election of the States that are to succeed them as members of the Commission, unless they are re-elected."

In decision 1997/316, the Council authorized the Commission to convene an organizational meeting in 1997 for the sole purpose of electing the new Chairman and other members of the Bureau in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council; decided that the terms of office of the new Bureau would begin immediately upon election and end at the conclusion of the sixth session of the Commission in 1998; and decided to extend the terms of office of those members of the Commission whose terms were to expire on 31 December 1997 until the conclusion of the sixth session of the Commission.

On 22 December 1997, the Commission elected, by acclamation, Mr. Cielito Habito (Philippines) Chairman, and Mr. Michael Odevall (Sweden), Mr. Rogatien Biaou (Benin) and Ms. Marta Inés Galindo (Colombia) Vice-Chairmen. It postponed the election of one Vice-Chairman.

The membership of the Commission is given in annex II below.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 7 of the rules of procedure provides that the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda.

In decision 1997/308, the Council took note of the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its fifth session and in resolution 1997/63 approved the provisional agenda for the sixth session.

3. Sectoral theme: strategic approaches to freshwater management

In the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, the Assembly called for a dialogue under the aegis of the Commission, beginning at its sixth session, aimed at building a consensus of the necessary actions and, in particular, on the means of implementation and on tangible results, in order to consider initiating a strategic approach for the implementation of all aspects of the sustainable use of freshwater for social and economic purposes, including safe drinking water and sanitation, water for irrigation, recycling and waste-water management, and the important role freshwater plays in natural ecosystems (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 35).

In resolution 1997/63, the Council approved the multi-year programme of work for the Commission, recommended by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session.

Also in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Assembly decided that the Commission, under the guidance of the Council, should continue to provide a forum for the exchange of national experience and best practices in the area of sustainable development, including through voluntary national communications or reports (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 133 (b)).

Accordingly, on 21 January 1998, the Bureau of the sixth session of the Commission, bearing in mind the working methods of the Commission, decided that five countries, one from each regional group, would make presentations, as follows: two to the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Strategic Approaches to Freshwater Management (Wednesday, 25 February) and three during the first day of the sixth session of the Commission (Monday, 20 April).

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on strategic approaches to freshwater management (E/CN.17/1998/2 and Add.1)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the field of freshwater resources (E/CN.17/1998/3)

Letter dated 11 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Strategic Approaches to Freshwater Management, held at Harare from 27 to 30 January 1998 (E/CN.17/1998/11)

Report of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Strategic Approaches to Freshwater Management (E/CN.17/1998/13)

Report of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development for the 1997 review of the Rio commitments (E/CN.17/1997/17/Add.1)

4. Cross-sectoral theme: transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising

In resolution 1997/63, the Council approved the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for the period 1998-2002, including the cross-sectoral theme for the sixth session. Accordingly, the main issues for an integrated discussion by the Commission under this item are transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising (E/CN.17/1998/6 and Add.1-3)

Letter dated 23 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the International Expert Meeting on the Role of Publicly Funded Research and Publicly Owned Technologies in the Transfer and Diffusion of Environmentally Sound Technologies, held at Kyongju, Republic of Korea, from 4 to 6 February 1998 (E/CN.17/1998/12)

5. Economic sector/major group: industry

In accordance with the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and Council resolution 1997/63, the Commission should strengthen its interaction with representatives

of major groups, including through greater and better use of focused dialogue sessions and round tables; the major groups are encouraged to adopt arrangements for coordination and interaction in providing inputs to the Commission; this could include inputs from business and industry groups on the elaboration, promotion and sharing of sustainable development practices and the promotion of corporate responsibility and accountability (Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 133 (e)).

In the light of the above, the Bureau of the fifth session of the Commission, which met on 2 and 3 October 1997, suggested that a separate segment of the sixth session be devoted to industry. This segment would provide for an interactive dialogue between the representatives of industry (both the business community and trade unions), non-governmental organizations, Governments and international organizations. Based on previous experience, the Bureau was of the view that, to ensure a participatory and interactive dialogue between the representatives of Governments and other participants, no other meetings should be held in parallel.

The Bureau of the sixth session, at its meeting on 21 January 1998, continued its consideration of the arrangements for the segment on industry. It recommended that the segment be held for a two-day period, 20 and 21 April 1998; expressed the hope that both Governments and major groups would be represented at a high level; and stressed the need for balanced representation of the corporate sector, trade unions and non-governmental organizations from both developed and developing countries.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on industry and sustainable development (E/CN.17/1998/4 and Add.1-3)

Report of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Industry and Sustainable Development (E/CN.17/1998/14)

6. Progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

At its fourth session, in 1996, the Commission carried out a mid-term review of selected programme areas of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In resolution 1997/63, the Economic and Social Council approved the recommendation of the General Assembly that the Commission undertake at its sixth session, in 1998, a review of all the outstanding chapters and issues of the Programme of Action.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (E/CN.17/1998/7 and Add.1-9)

Report of the Secretary-General on the development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States (A/53/65-E/1998/5)

7. High-level meeting

In resolution 47/191, the General Assembly recommended that the Commission adopt at its first session a multi-year thematic programme of work, including a high-level meeting, with ministerial participation, to have an integrated overview of the implementation of Agenda 21, to consider emerging policy issues and to provide necessary political impetus

to the implementation of the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the commitments contained therein.

At its first session, the Commission decided that, as a rule, its high-level meetings should last for a period of up to three days and that they should be integral parts of the session of the Commission and of its decision-making process. The organization of work of the high-level meetings should provide, *inter alia*, for an open exchange of views among the participants and for holding informal meetings, as the need arose, to resolve outstanding issues related to its work that required high-level consideration. The result of the high-level meetings could be a concise document, should the participants deem that appropriate.

In the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the General Assembly decided that, based on the experience gained during the period 1993-1997, the Commission, under the guidance of the Council, should make concerted efforts to attract greater involvement in its work of ministers and high-level national policy makers responsible for specific economic and social sectors, who, in particular, are encouraged to participate in the annual high-level segment of the Commission, together with the ministers and policy makers responsible for environment and development; the high-level segments of the Commission should become more interactive, and should focus on the priority issues being considered at a particular session; and the Bureau of the Commission should conduct timely and open-ended consultations with a view to improving the organization of the work of the high-level segment (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 133 (a)).

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the main and emerging issues for the high-level meeting of the Commission (E/CN.17/1998/10)

8. Other matters

In resolution 1997/53, the Council welcomed the recent initiatives of the United Nations in partnership with international consumer organizations, such as Consumers International, donors and host Governments, in convening regional conferences on consumer protection, such as those held in Africa and in the Asia and Pacific region, for initiating the process of revising the guidelines for consumer protection and extending them into the area of sustainable consumption patterns and other possible areas; requested the Secretary-General to undertake that work through the convening of an interregional expert group meeting, to be financed from extrabudgetary resources and in collaboration with interested Governments, Consumers International and other concerned entities active in this field; and recommended that the interregional expert group meeting elaborate specific recommendations for guidelines for sustainable consumption patterns for submission to the Council at its substantive session of 1998 through the Commission for Sustainable Development at its sixth session.

In the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the General Assembly decided that the Commission, under the guidance of the Council, should continue to provide a forum for the exchange of national experience and best practices in the area of sustainable development, including through voluntary national communications or reports (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 133 (b)).

Also in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the General Assembly decided that the Commission, under the guidance of the Council, should take into account regional developments related to the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and that it should provide a forum for the

exchange of experience on regional and subregional initiatives and regional collaboration for sustainable development (resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 133 (c)).

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on consumer protection (E/CN.17/1998/5)

Report of the Secretary-General on an assessment of information contained in the national reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/CN.17/1998/8)

Report of the Secretary-General on modalities for regional exchanges of information (E/CN.17/1998/9)

9. Adoption of the provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Commission

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General shall submit a draft provisional agenda for the Commission's forthcoming session, indicating in respect of each agenda item the documents to be submitted under that item and the legislative authority for their preparation, in order to enable the Commission to consider the documents from the point of view of their contribution to the work of the Commission and of their urgency and relevance in the light of the current session.

10. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixth session

In accordance with rule 37 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission reports to the Council on the work of each session.

Annex I

Proposed organization of work

The proposed organization of work for the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development has been drawn up on the basis of the decisions taken by the Commission at its organizational session and on informal consultations conducted by the Chairman with the Bureau.

Proposed programme of work

Week of 20-24 April

Monday, 20 April		Opening of the session
a.m.	*Item 1*	Election of officers
	Item 2	Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
	Items 3 and 5	Presentations on the outcome of the work of the inter-sessional ad hoc working groups
	Item 3	Exchange of national experiences in the area of freshwater
p.m.	*Item 3*	Exchange of national experiences in the area of freshwater
	Item 4	Cross-sectoral theme: transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising
		General discussion
Tuesday, 21 April		
a.m. and p.m.	*Item 5*	Industry segment
Wednesday, 22 April		
a.m. and p.m.	*Item 5*	Industry segment
Thursday, 23 April		
p.m.	*Item 4*	Cross-sectoral theme: transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising
		Continuation and conclusion of the general discussion
a.m.	*Item 6*	Review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
		General discussion
Friday, 24 April		
a.m. and p.m.		Work of the drafting groups*

* In accordance with the practice of the Commission, three drafting groups will be established during the sixth session, on the understanding that no more than two will meet simultaneously.

Week of 27 April-1 May

Monday, 27 April

a.m. and p.m.		Work of the drafting groups*

Tuesday, 28 April

a.m. and p.m.		Work in the drafting groups*

Wednesday, 29 April

a.m. and p.m.	*Item 7*	High-level meeting

Thursday, 30 April

a.m. and p.m.	*Item 7*	High-level meeting

Friday, 1 May

a.m.	*Item 7*	High-level meeting
p.m.	*Item 7*	Conclusion of the high-level meeting
	Item 8	Other matters
	Item 9	Provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Commission
	Item 10	Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixth session

* In accordance with the practice of the Commission, three drafting groups will be established during the sixth session, on the understanding that no more than two will meet simultaneously.

Annex II

Membership of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1998

(53 members; three-year term)

Members	*Term expires on 31 December*
Algeria	2000
Antigua and Barbuda	1998
Belgium	1998
Benin	1998
Bolivia	1998
Brazil	2000
Bulgaria	1999
Canada	1999
Central African Republic	1998
China	1998
Colombia	1998
Côte d'Ivoire	2000
Czech Republic	2000
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2000
Djibouti	1999
Egypt	1999
France	2000
Gabon	1998
Germany	1998
Guyana	1998
Hungary	2000
India	1999
Indonesia	1999
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2000
Ireland	1999
Japan	1999
Mauritania	2000
Mauritius	2000
Mexico	1999
Mozambique	1998
Netherlands	1998
New Zealand	2000

Members	*Term expires on 31 December*
Nicaragua	2000
Niger	1999
Pakistan	1998
Panama	1999
Peru	2000
Philippines	2000
Poland	1998
Portugal	2000
Russian Federation	1998
Saudi Arabia	1998
Slovakia	1999
Spain	2000
Sri Lanka	2000
Sudan	1999
Sweden	1998
Switzerland	1998
Thailand	1998
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1999
United States of America	1999
Venezuela	1999
Zimbabwe	1998